

**Amendments to the Claims:**

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A game performing method for executing a game by controlling movements of characters constituting a character group in a game space and by generating an image of the game space,

wherein the character group includes a plurality of character groups, the method comprising:

setting a plurality of sample points in the game space;

calculating positions of the characters after a prescribed time when the characters keep a present moving situation;

calculating ~~the time~~a time for each character to arrive at the set plurality of sample points from the calculated positions as starting points;

drawing out, from the plurality of sample points, sample points to which an arrival time is more than or equal to a reference time for determining a space ~~are~~area for any character in any of the character groups, based on the calculated arrival time, the space area being an area not belonging to ~~the power~~a power of any of the character groups in the game space;

recognizing the space area in the game space, based on the drawn out sample points;

controlling the movements of the characters based on the space area and/or magnitudes of the space area in the game space; and

updating the image of the game space.
2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) A game performing method for executing a game by controlling movements of characters constituting a character group in a game space and by generating an image of the game space,

wherein the character group includes a plurality of character groups,

the method comprising:

setting a plurality of sample points in the game space;

calculating positions of the characters after a prescribed time when the characters keep a present moving situation;

calculating ~~the time~~ a time for each character to arrive at the set plurality of sample points from the calculated positions as starting points;

recognizing an area pertaining to power of each of the character groups, wherein the power of each of the character groups is based on an arrival time of each of the characters in the character group to each character's sample point, from among the calculated arrival time;

recognizing, as a space area, an area not belonging to the power of any of the character groups in the game space, based on the recognized area pertaining to the power;

controlling the movements of the characters based on a position of the space area and/or a magnitude of the space area in the game space; and

updating the image of the game space.

4. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 3, further comprising:

setting movement target positions within the recognized space areas,

wherein controlling the movements of the characters includes moving the characters to the set movement target positions.

5. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 4, wherein movement target positions are set from recognized power areas to recognized non-power-space areas.

6. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:  
selecting a character within a character group and controlling the movements  
of the character based on the relative positional relationship between the character and the  
space area and/or the magnitudes of the space area.
7. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 6,  
wherein the game is a competition-type game, in which an attacking direction  
of the character group is previously determined, and  
the character selected to be controlled is selected in consideration of the  
attacking direction of the character group.
8. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 6,  
wherein the game is a ball game, and  
the character selected to be controlled is selected in consideration of a position  
of a ball in the game space.
9. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 3,  
wherein the character groups ~~includes~~include a first character group and a  
second character group,  
the power of each of the character groups is based on the calculated times of  
each group to arrive at their respective sample points, and  
controlling the movements of the characters constituting the first character  
group based on the characters' positions and/or the magnitudes of power in the recognized  
areas wherein the recognized areas pertain to the power of the second character group in the  
game space; and  
controlling the movements of the characters constituting the second character  
group based on the characters' positions and/or the magnitudes of power in the recognized

areas wherein the recognized areas pertain to the power of the first character group in the game space.

10. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 3,  
wherein the character ~~group includes groups include~~ a first character group and a second character group,  
the power of each of the character groups is based on the calculated times of each group to arrive at their respective sample points,  
the controlling of the movements of the characters constitutes the first character group based on the characters' positions and/or the magnitudes of power in the recognized areas wherein the recognized areas pertain to the power of the first character group in the game space, and  
controlling the movements of the characters constituting the second character group based on the characters' positions and/or the magnitudes of power in the recognized areas wherein the recognized areas pertain to the power of the second character group in the game space.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A game apparatus for executing a game by controlling movements of characters constituting a character group in a game space, and by generating an image of the game space,  
wherein the character group includes a plurality of character groups,  
the game apparatus comprising:  
a point setting section for setting a plurality of sample points in the game space;

an inertia calculation section for calculating positions of the characters after a prescribed time when the characters keep a present moving situation;

an arrival time calculation section for calculating the times that each character takes to reach the set plurality of sample points from the calculated positions as starting points;

a drawing section for drawing out, from the plurality of sample points, sample points to which an arrival time is more than or equal to a reference time for determining a space ~~are-area~~ for any character in any of the character groups, based on the calculated arrival time, the space area being an area not belonging to the power of any of the character groups in the game space;

a space area recognition section for recognizing the space area in the game space, based on the drawn out sample points;

a movement control section for controlling the movements of the characters based on a position of the space area and/or a magnitude of the space area in the game space; and

a generated image display section for displaying the generated the display image.

13. (Currently Amended) A computer-executable storage medium that contains a computer executable program ~~for receiving that causes an operating device to receive~~ a data signal embodied in a carrier wave, the data signal ~~for executing the method as claimed in claim 1, causing the operating device to perform a method comprising:~~

setting a plurality of sample points in a game space;

calculating positions of characters after a prescribed time when the characters keep a present moving situation;

calculating a time for each character to arrive at the set plurality of sample points from the calculated positions as starting points;

drawing out, from the plurality of sample points, sample points to which an arrival time is more than or equal to a reference time for determining a space area for any character in any of the character groups, based on the calculated arrival time, the space area being an area not belonging to a power of any of the character groups in the game space;  
recognizing the space area in the game space, based on the drawn out sample points;

controlling movements of the characters based on the space area and/or magnitudes of the space area in the game space; and  
updating the image of the game space.

14. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium that includes a program stored therein, wherein when loaded onto an operating device, the program makes ~~an~~ the operating device execute ~~the method as claimed in claim 1 when loaded onto the operating device.~~a method comprising:

setting a plurality of sample points in a game space;  
calculating positions of characters after a prescribed time when the characters keep a present moving situation;

calculating a time for each character to arrive at the set plurality of sample points from the calculated positions as starting points;

drawing out, from the plurality of sample points, sample points to which an arrival time is more than or equal to a reference time for determining a space area for any character in any of the character groups, based on the calculated arrival time, the space area being an area not belonging to a power of any of the character groups in the game space;

recognizing the space area in the game space, based on the drawn out sample points;

controlling movements of the characters based on the space area and/or magnitudes of the space area in the game space; and  
updating the image of the game space.

15. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:  
setting movement target positions within the recognized space areas,  
wherein controlling the movements of the characters includes moving the  
characters to the set movement target positions.
16. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 3, further comprising:  
selecting a character within a character group and controlling the movements  
of the character based on the relative positional relationship between the character and the  
space area and/or the magnitudes of the space area.
17. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 16,  
wherein the game is a competition-type game, in which an attacking direction  
of the character group is previously determined, and  
the character selected to be controlled ~~as selected~~is selected in consideration of  
the attacking direction of the character group.
18. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 16,  
wherein the game is a ball game, and  
the character selected to be controlled is selected in consideration of the  
position of a ball in the game space.
19. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in claim 3,  
wherein the powers of the character groups are recognized when a  
predominance degree of each sample point is calculated so as to make the predominance  
degree higher as the arrival time of the character is shorter.
20. (Canceled)

21. (Previously Presented) A game apparatus for executing a game by controlling movements of characters constituting a character group in a game space and by generating an image of the game space,

22. (Currently Amended) A computer-executable storage medium that contains a computer executable program ~~for receiving that causes an operating device to receive a data signal embodied in a carrier wave, the data signal for executing the method as claimed in claim 3, causing the operating device to perform a method comprising:~~

setting a plurality of sample points in a game space;

calculating positions of characters after a prescribed time when the characters keep a present moving situation;

calculating a time for each character to arrive at the set plurality of sample points from the calculated positions as starting points;

recognizing an area pertaining to power of each of the character groups,

wherein the power of each of the character groups is based on an arrival time of each of the characters in the character group to each character's sample point, from among the calculated arrival time;

recognizing, as a space area, an area not belonging to the power of any of the character groups in the game space, based on the recognized area pertaining to the power;

controlling the movements of the characters based on a position of the space area and/or a magnitude of the space area in the game space; and

updating the image of the game space.

23. (Currently Amended) A computer-executable storage medium that stores a program, wherein when the program is loaded onto an operating device, the program making the operating device execute ~~the method as claimed in claim 3, a method comprising:~~

setting a plurality of sample points in a game space;

calculating positions of characters after a prescribed time when the characters keep a present moving situation;

calculating a time for each character to arrive at the set plurality of sample points from the calculated positions as starting points;

recognizing an area pertaining to power of each of the character groups, wherein the power of each of the character groups is based on an arrival time of each of the characters in the character group to each character's sample point, from among the calculated arrival time;

recognizing, as a space area, an area not belonging to the power of any of the character groups in the game space, based on the recognized area pertaining to the power;

controlling the movements of the characters based on a position of the space area and/or a magnitude of the space area in the game space; and

updating the image of the game space.